

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) An electronic drinking mug comprising:

said mug having an upper end and a lower end;
a heating element in thermal communication with said mug for heating a liquid contained in said mug;

a temperature sensor in communication with said heating element for monitoring a temperature of said liquid;

a controller integrally attached to an outer surface of the mug and in communication with said heating element for selectively activating and deactivating said heating element so as to heat said liquid in said mug to a desired temperature, wherein said controller receives temperature signals from said temperature sensor and deactivates said heating element when the monitored temperature of said liquid is greater than or equal to the desired temperature of said liquid; and

a user interface integrally attached to the outer surface of said mug and being in communication with said controller for establishing the desired temperature of said liquid, wherein said user interface is located closer to the upper end of said mug than the lower end of said mug.

2. (original) The electronic drinking mug as claimed in claim 1, wherein said user interface includes a visual display in communication with said controller for displaying the monitored temperature or the established desired temperature of said liquid

3. (original) The electronic drinking mug as claimed in claim 2, wherein said visual display includes a liquid crystal display (LCD).

4. (original) The electronic drinking mug as claimed in claim 2, wherein said visual display includes a LED panel having a series of light emitting diodes, each said light emitting diode being associated with liquid temperature levels selected from the group consisting of room temperature, lukewarm, hot, and very hot.

5. (original) The electronic drinking mug as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a thermostat in communication with said heating element for regulating a temperature of said heating element.

6. (original) The electronic drinking mug as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a sound generating element in signal receiving relation with said controller for selectively generating an audible sound.

7. (canceled)

8. (original) The electronic drinking mug as claimed in claim 1, wherein said controller includes a logic subroutine that deactivates said heating element when the monitored temperature is greater than or equal to said desired temperature and reactivates said heating element when the monitored temperature falls at least 2°F below the desired temperature.

9. (original) The electronic drinking mug as claimed in claim 1, further comprising an electrical connector accessible at an exterior surface of said mug for providing electrical power to said controller and said heating element.

10. (original) The electronic drinking mug as claimed in claim 1, wherein said controller has an overheat protection logic stored therein, wherein said controller deactivates said heating element when the monitored temperature is greater than a predetermined overheat temperature.

11. (original) The electronic drinking mug as claimed in claim 10, wherein said controller activates a visual or audible indicator when the monitored temperature is greater than the predetermined overheat temperature.

12. (canceled)

13. (original) The electronic drinking mug as claimed in claim 1, wherein said mug includes an outer mug, a removable inner mug insertable in said outer mug, and said heating element disposed between said outer and inner mugs.

14. (canceled)

15. (canceled)

16. (original) The electronic drinking mug as claimed in claim 1, further comprising at least one temperature set key in signal sending relation with said controller.

17. (previously presented) The electronic drinking mug as claimed in claim 16, wherein said at least one temperature set key is depressible and wherein the selected temperature is elevated one degree each time said at least one set key is depressed and the selected temperature is elevated more rapidly when said at least one set key is depressed and maintained in the depressed position for more than a predetermined time period.

18. (currently amended) The electronic drinking mug as claimed in claim 17, wherein said temperature set key is depressible for activating said mug.

19. (currently amended) A method of maintaining a liquid at a selected temperature comprising:

providing a drinking mug having an upper end, a lower end and a heating element in thermal communication with said mug;

providing a temperature sensor in communication with said heating element for continuously monitoring a temperature of said liquid;

integrally attaching a user interface to the outer surface of said mug at a location closer to the upper end of said mug than the lower end of said mug, wherein said user interface is in communication with a controller for establishing the desired temperature of said liquid;

inserting a lower end of said mug into a cup holder so that the upper end of said mug including said user interface is located above the cup holder, wherein said user interface is visible and accessible above the cupholder;

engaging said user interface for selecting the desired temperature for said liquid; and

heating said liquid to said selected temperature.

20. (original) The method as claimed in claim 19, further comprising deactivating said heating element after the heating

step when said monitored temperature is greater than or equal to said desired temperature.

21. (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 20, further comprising reactivating said heating element after the deactivating step when said monitored temperature is less than said desired temperature, and after the inserting step, engaging said user interface for reestablishing the desired temperature for said liquid..

22. (original) The method as claimed in claim 19, further comprising generating a visual or audible signal when said monitored temperature is greater than or equal to said desired temperature.

23. (original) The method as claimed in claim 19, further comprising providing a controller in communication with said heating element and said temperature sensor, wherein said controller has one or more logic subroutines stored therein for activating said heating element when the monitored temperature is less than the desired temperature and deactivating said heating element when the monitored temperature is greater than or equal to said desired temperature.

24. (original) The method as claimed in claim 19, further comprising providing a series of light emitting diodes exposed at an exterior surface of said mug for indicating when the monitored temperature of said liquid is at a level associated with room temperature, lukewarm, hot, and very hot.

25. (original) The method as claimed in claim 19, further comprising providing a visual display at the exterior surface of said mug for displaying the monitored temperature or the selected temperature.

26. (canceled)

27. (currently amended) An electronic drinking mug comprising:

said drinking mug including an outer mug and an inner mug insertable into said outer mug, said outer mug having an upper end, a lower end and a center midway between the upper and lower ends;

a heating element in communication with said inner mug for heating a liquid contained in said inner mug;

a temperature sensor in communication with said inner mug for monitoring a temperature of said liquid;

a controller being in communication with said heating element and said temperature sensor;

a user interface being integrally attached to said exterior surface of said outer mug and being in communication with said controller for establishing a desired temperature of said liquid, wherein said controller selectively activates and deactivates said heating element so as to heat said liquid in said inner mug to said desired temperature and wherein said controller is adapted to receive temperature signals from said temperature sensor and deactivate said heating element when the monitored temperature of said liquid is greater than or equal to said desired temperature of said liquid, wherein said user interface is located between the center and the upper end of said outer mug and is spaced from the lower end of said outer mug whereby when the lower end of said outer mug is placed in a cup holder, said user interface is visible and accessible above the cup holder.

28. (previously presented) The electronic drinking mug as claimed in claim 27, wherein said outer mug includes a recess and said controller and said user interface are secured to said recess.

29. (previously presented) The electronic drinking mug as claimed in claim 28, wherein recess includes a series of anchor points and said controller is secured to said anchor points by securing elements.

30. (previously presented) The electronic drinking mug as claimed in claim 27, wherein said user interface includes a series of light emitting diodes that are each activated by said controller at distinct temperature levels.

31. (previously presented) The electronic drinking mug as claimed in claim 30, wherein each one of said light emitting diodes is associated with one of said distinct temperature

levels, and wherein only one of said light emitting diodes is illuminated at any one time.

32. (new) The electronic drinking mug as claimed in claim 27, further comprising a handle secured to the exterior surface of said outer mug, said handle having a first section secured to said mug that extends substantially perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of said mug, said handle having a second section that extends from the first handle section, the second section extending downwardly toward the lower end of said mug, said second handle section having a free end spaced from the exterior surface of said outer mug.

33. (new) The electronic drinking mug as claimed in claim 32, wherein the second section of said handle is curved.

34. (new) The electronic drinking mug as claimed in claim 32, wherein the first section of said handle is substantially straight.

35. (new) The electronic drinking mug as claimed in claim 27, further comprising an electrical connector provided at the exterior surface of said outer mug for providing electrical power to said controller and said heating element, said electrical connector being located approximately midway between the upper and lower ends of said outer mug.

36. (new) The electronic drinking mug as claimed in claim 27, wherein the exterior surface of said outer mug tapers inwardly between the upper end and the lower end of said outer mug.

37. (new) The electronic drinking mug as claimed in claim 27, wherein the exterior surface of said outer mug tapers inwardly along a substantially smooth line between the upper end and the lower end of said outer mug.